5: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1903 FL11 Luo FL11
Nandi FL13
Bantu Kavirondo FL4

B 553

of the baby, if a boy, and round its left wrist, if a girl. Next morning, the body and head of the quail are cut off, leaving the lower half of the beak of the bird suspended by the string round the child's neck; everyone then knows that it has been named.

Names are often suggested by some event happening at the time.

Mumia was born on the day of an attack by the Wamia or Elgumi people, and was thus named Mumia. Formerly, again, when Europeans were great rarities in the county, if a child was born on the day a caravan camped at the village, it would often be named after the leader of it, if he chanced to be well known, thus "Jaksinis," "Martinis," and "Obiloe"[1] are very common.

Tattooing and Tribal Marks.

L 304 [847]

These rarely appear to have any special significance, but, among the Ja-Luo people, it is thought that a woman will not bear children unless she is tattooed.

All Kisumu girls are tattooed just below the navel (Fig. 8). When, however, a woman first becomes pregnant, more elaborate tattooings are added in front as far up as the breasts, and a belt of markings is carried right round the waist. All the men are not marked, it is quite a matter of choice with them. For instance, the head chief of the Kisumu people is not tattooed.

Fig. 8.

The various tribes of the Ja-Luo have slightly differing tattoo marks.

B 304 [833]

Among the Ketosh, if a warrior kills an enemy in warfare, on his return he has two rows of round marks tattooed on his right chest and continued upwards over his right shoulder; moreover, upon reaching home, it is considered essential that he should have connection with his wife as soon as convenient; this is believed to prevent the spirit of his dead enemy from haunting and bewitching him.

The Turkana and Suk tattoo rows of spots from the chest over the shoulder, but whether this is significant of the warrior having killed an enemy or not, is not known.

An examination of the Ketosh language affords reasons for believing that there is a strain of Koromojo or Turkana blood among them, and this peculiar tattooing custom may be additional evidence of the affinity.

The Ketosh women have a number of raised dots tattooed on their stomachs and abdomen arranged regularly in chess board fashion. An irritant is rubbed into the cuts to produce weals.

L B N

Numerical Proportion of Sexes.

162 515

In a previous publication[2] I ventured the opinion that the female sex greatly outnumbered the male. My observation was based upon the prevalence of

[1] The native version of the names Jackson, Martin and Hobley.

[2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 18

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
FL11 Luo FL11

When A MAN MARRIES

591 a second or third wife, he may select another place for his new wife, either in the village near his former wife, or he may elect to take her to some other village. A man who has wives dwelling in different places lives with them in turn. Married
586 women are careful in regard to their relations with men. Should a woman be lax in her behaviour or encourage men to visit her, her husband will send her back to her parents and divorce her.

842 A wife who is proved to be sterile is not divorced, but her
595 parents send her sister to become the man's wife, and he is expected to pay another sum as a marriage-fee for her; but there is no stated time when the sum shall be paid after the woman goes to live with him. The former wife continues to live with him as his wife.

291 **Distinctive dress of married women.** Each woman after marriage makes a girdle with a long fringe at the back and ties the ends together, which gives it the appearance of a tail. The girdle is worn constantly during the husband's life-time,
[165] but, should he die, she takes it off and puts it on the house-roof over the door during the season of mourning to show that she is a widow and is mourning. After marriage a wife scarifies
304 her sides and back in addition to the scarifications she made at puberty. When a woman has a son born, she makes a
352 clay-mound in the middle of the floor in her house for the
852 food pot to rest on when the family are at meals.

Birth customs. A wife who expects her confinement calls
844 in an elderly woman to act as midwife. This woman is a person who has had experience in such matters and is herself a mother. When the child is born, the midwife cuts the umbilical cord on an axe handle if the child is a boy, and on a hoe handle if it is a girl. The placenta of a boy is buried outside on the right side of the doorway and that of a girl on the left side. During the first three days the father remains near the house
846 in which his wife and child lie, but the midwife alone enters and attends to the wants of the mother and child. On the third day the father takes a fowl and rubs it on the child's chest and turns it loose, when it becomes the property of the child. When the new moon appears, the parents bathe, and

11: Hartmann M-5 (ca. 1920) 1928 FL11 Luo FL11

Some Customs of the Luwo (or Nilotic Kavirondo) living in South Kavirondo.

By the Rev. H. Hartmann.

Contents:

Birth. — Betrothal and Marriage. — Burial of a married Man. — Burial of a Woman. — Burial of a Child.

Birth.

The Luwo people live together with their families in kraals. These families consist of the owner of the village with his wives, and his sons with their respective wives and children, and the owner's unmarried daughters.

Each wife has her own hut. The husband spends most of his time in the hut of his favourite wife. He may, however, have besides a hut for each of his wives, a small hut for himself, but he will never sleep in it. For this purpose he goes to the huts of each of his wives in turn, or generally he sleeps in that of his favourite wife, and visits the others, whenever he is informed by the women that one of them has menstruated, then after 2 days he goes to her hut for a couple of nights.

If a woman has conceived and happens to be one who has not brought forth yet, then 3 or 4 months after conception she gets little incisions *(kodo)* made all round the waist. For this operation the patient has to sit down on a stone (nothing else). The operation is performed by an older woman. She uses a crooked thorn which is hooked under the skin, and where the point of the thorn lifts the skin a very tiny cut is made with a native razor. Between every cut there is a space of about $^1/_4$ of an inch. Three rows of incisions are made this way all round the waist just below the navel, the rows being also about $^1/_4$ of an inch apart. No medicine is applied.

When the skin is healed again the woman goes home for 3 days to show herself *(nyo kodo)* and a goat is killed for her by her father. She returns with roasted *wimbi* flour for brewing beer and a sheep. When the beer is ready the sheep and some chickens are killed and they have a feast *(kong kodo kodo)*.

After the feast the young woman gets from an older one some medicine, the ashes of burnt herbs, of which she has to taste a little morning and night for one month *(nudgo mindo)*.

When this month is over she gets another medicine, prepared out of cooked roots of plants *(yath ogolo)* which she takes morning and night until one month before giving birth.

In case a woman who is with child has committed adultery she takes a certain medicine, called *manyasi*, otherwise she will have a miscarriage or the child will be a weakling.

When the hour of childbirth has come the woman sits down on the floor of the hut naked. Even the usual string of beads is taken from her waist. A

11: Hartmann M-5 (ca. 1920) 1928 FL11 Luo FL11

with their buffalo-hide-shields and spears singing all the time. Meanwhile the heads of all the people of deceased's kraal except his wives are being shaven clean, whilst for this purpose they, in turn, are seated on a log of a thorn-tree, which is put across the main path leading to the village. 765 [302]

On the third day a billy-goat is killed and the meat is cooked and eaten by the women and girls of the kraal only, and an old woman gets the skin of the goat as a new skirt.

On the 4th day the relations go to the grave again and sweep it *(yweyo lit)* with a special kind of grass, putting some earth of the grave in an old basket. This is put in the middle of the path leading to the village, together with the log of wood (stride) which deceased used to rest his head on when sleeping Nobody will afterwards touch these 2 articles; they are left there in the middle of the path. People will in future go past them, making a curve round them. — This explains why one very seldom finds a straight path leading to a kraal. — The hoe, which was used in digging the grave, is given to an old woman of an other part of the district, but the hoe handle is thrown away. Then all the relations living away from the kraal, and all the neighbours go home. [513]

When they have gone, the stick on top of the deceased hut, and those on the huts of all his women are broken by the grandchild of deceased or by some other small boy. This is a sign to anybody that the occupants of those huts are mourning.

After about two months the wives of deceased go to the village of their parents where they stay for two days, and a young bull is killed for them in honour of deceased. Before the wives have been home, they are not allowed to sleep anywhere but in the deceased husband's village, except under extraordinary circumstances, e. g. if a woman is not able to cross a river on the way home; in such cases she may sleep in another village, but only in the hut of an old woman. If she would break this rule, then the woman in whose hut she slept would not bring forth any children. [842]

Six months later beer is brewn for all the relations and neighbours, who come for the occasion. That day the grave is smeared with mud *(mwono lit)* and the women get their heads shaven for the first time since the death of their husband. Now also all the wives of deceased are disposed of; they go to either the brothers or the cousins of their former husband. The time of mourning is finished and the sticks are replaced on top of the huts by the same boy who broke them off. That night however the women sleep on the bare ground. That day the women wear new white tassels on their backs. These tassels are made as usual from the twisted marrow of papyrus stalks or of sisal-fibre. For since the death of their husband they have left off their ordinary tassel, which they replaced by a coarse untwisted one, made of the fibrous bark of the wild fig-tree. [291]

Then new huts are built for the women, if their new husbands live in another village, and when these are ready their former huts are broken down. If their new husbands live in the same kraal they keep their own huts, except if deceased was buried inside his hut. In this case a new hut is built and the old one is allowed to collapse over the grave. If deceased was buried in a little hut built over grave, then this hut is left till it tumbles down by itself. When later on somebody gets 768 769 753

231 Old cows which have stopped producing are usually killed
[837] and their meat exchanged for millet or maize which in turn
is bartered for new young heifers, bulls, goats or sheep, or if
764 necessary used for consumption. The same applies to oxen
although these are usually exchanged directly for other stock.
A heifer is usually worth two bulls or young oxen. The special
oxen used by their owners as companions when they attend
funeral mournings are seldom exchanged, but are slaughtered
when they get old, the owners preparing special feasts as a
tribute to their past service. A young man who has ridden a
special ox at funeral dances does not eat the meat when the
ox dies as a result of disease or accident. These "companions"
are usually honoured by having bells fixed on special leather
straps fastened around their necks. Some he-goats are also so
honoured. The ringing of these bells will sometimes stop
hyenas from entering the kraal and may help in tracing animals
when grazing in bushy country. The ears of the owners are
usually sensitive to the sound of the bells of their own oxen.

231 The Luo do not like polled cattle because some of them
believe that such animals are unlucky. They say that if a
● [842] polled animal is paid as part of a dowry the woman is likely
to be sterile. They are very fond of oxen with long horns or
those with peculiarly or funnily placed horns. During drinking
parties the owners of such oxen "show off" by placing their
arms in different positions to demonstrate the directions of the
[556] horns of their oxen. This performance is a sign of wealth
because the average man does not possess a number of oxen
with abnormally-placed horns. Long-horned cows are not of
special value. The horns of dangerous animals are cut so as to
reduce the risk of people and young animals being horned.

Beautifying animals by branding which is practised by
some African tribes is not favoured by the Luo. The only
method that is used to increase the natural beauty of cattle,
[232] especially bull calves, is to trim the ears. Trimming is, however,
also done as a treatment for east coast fever because in this
disease the animal appears dull and heavy as if suffering from
headache, and the Luo believe that by letting a little blood
from the ear the headache is eased.

231 Luo cattle-owners do not usually go in for special colours,
but there are some colours which are considered objectionable.
822 Pure white is not liked because white animals are usually
susceptible to skin diseases, accidental skin lesions and to
marking by tick-bites which usually remain permanently
conspicuous. Another objectionable colour is striped, dark,
dull-brown. Animals with these mixed colours are not accepted
for dowry because the disagreeable colours may cause disagree-
ment during the arrangement of the marriage or between the
wife and her husband. Brown is unanimously favoured because
it is considered resistant to skin diseases and accidental injuries.

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

the herds and, by emulation of the age group next above them, slowly acquiring proficiency in the typical adult male pursuits, while the girls are drawn into the domestic tasks of the elementary family, food preparation and cooking, fetching water, and minding babies.

The young boys of a play group sleep together in the goat hut of a homestead when they no longer share their mother's hut at night. The girls sleep together in the hut of some widow of the group who is past childbearing age. This is the most important institution for the transmission of female culture. Girls only leave it at marriage, and till that time they are continuously trained in the adult roles expected of them. Boys at puberty build themselves bachelor huts (Dholuo *simbi*) in which they sleep and where they also entertain their girl friends. A group of young men makes a formal assignation with a group of nubile girls from a segment of another maximal lineage into which marriage is possible, and visits and entertainments are held to and from the one lineage territory to the other. The two groups pair off with one another into sex partnerships which last till the groups break up and reform. A youth graduates out of this company of *simbi* age-mates at marriage.

Authority over children rests jointly with the parents. That of the mother is likely to be the most effective in the early years, and she always holds a strong sanction in her manipulation and control of the food-supply. The father is ultimately responsible for the order of the family, and his discipline is stronger than the mother's as the children grow older. There is a relation of friendly intimacy between alternate generations. Children are on easy terms with their grandparents and will certainly use the latters' households as an escape from home discipline or as a more generous source of food if need or opportunity arises. Children are at no period encouraged to live away from home with other relatives, but parents allow them to circulate freely among a number of homesteads wherever they find the best welcome and the most plentiful food, among families which are usually both neighbours and close agnatic relatives. Brother and sister have no material reasons for conflict and there is a strong and lasting bond of affection and reliance between them, institutionalized in the symbolism of a number of ritual occasions, and linked to their important later relation to one another's children as mother's brother (*senga*) and father's sister (*sayia*). Apart from parents, these are the only two consanguine relatives of the first ascending generation who are picked out by special kinship terms. The newly married woman is under the authority of her mother-in-law, and a man's relation to his wife's parents is marked by deep respect and avoidances. Ritual practices as well as personal attitudes emphasize the importance of fertility and virility,[1] and the value attached by a man to a numerous offspring and the ability of his wives to provide it. The Luo are aware of the male and female parts in procreation, but say that 'the woman's blood goes for nothing'. This seems a necessary inference from the nature of lineage organization rather than vice versa, for they would not argue that there is any tendency for children to resemble the father rather than the mother, nor do they permit marriage with close consanguine kin though of an unrelated lineage. It is

[1] e.g. the special rites which have to be carried out for a nubile girl dying unmarried, a wife dying without children, a widow dying before remarriage, a man dying when one of his wives is still childless, or a man dying before he has experienced sexual intercourse, the latter being treated similarly to a barren woman.

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

said that since property has passed to the lineage of a wife it has no claim on her offspring, consequently they take their father's lineage affiliation and can always be claimed by him because they result from his semen.

The Luo conceptualization of primary kinship attitudes is in conformity with the patterns of actual behaviour briefly outlined. The relation of co-wives is visualized as one of jealous rivalry. The term for it in Dholuo is *nyiego* and co-wives refer to one another as *nyieka*.[1] From co-wives themselves this relationship tends to spread to the elementary families of which they are the female heads. Children stick up for their mother's rights over against those of a stepmother. They stand to gain all round from successful competition with the other elementary families of their homestead. This is not of great permanent importance to the daughters, but the sons have everything that is worth while to gain or lose in their rivalry with the groups of their half-brothers. Their inheritance of the most valuable and essential property—livestock and land—depends on the allocation made by their father between the elementary families. But for uterine brothers it also depends on the allocation made between them within their elementary family. Consequently uterine brothers have material reasons for competing with one another, and also for combining together to compete with all other groups of uterine brothers in their compound family, being reinforced in this solidarity by the coincidence of their mother's interests against her co-wives. These pivotal relationships within household and homestead are conceptualized by the Luo as the origin of lineage structure. It might be objected that the orientations noted here are of a kind which naturally tend to be latent in any polygynous family system. The point is, however, that such orientations not only occur in the Luo family but are expected to occur; that the pattern of residence, the kinship terminology, the general conduct of family affairs, and the usual behaviour of its members all reflect this particular alinement rather than any other of a number of alinements possible in polygynous families, and are consciously thought to do so.[2] The main features are represented diagrammatically below (see p. 21).

It is impossible, within the space of this article, to give a full account of marriage types and contracts, the system of inheritance and of succession to property and authority, exogamy, blood-feuds, ancestor worship, and the like. All these matters have a bearing on lineage organization, and I try to give here a brief general account of them, sufficient only to make clear the nature of their connexion with the other material presented.[3]

Exogamy is an attribute of the maximal lineage.[4] This study is mainly concerned

[1] *nyiego* v., to snatch suddenly, or take by surprise; *nyiego* n., the relation of co-wives, jealousy; *nyieka* n., my co-wife, my partner in jealousy.

[2] In fact there are great similarities in this respect with the family structure of the Kikuyu, Kamba, and other East African peoples, but unfortunately the material on them does not tell us to what extent it is reflected in their lineage systems. Compare also Mayer, op. cit., p. 6. The most valuable comparative treatment of family structure from this angle is that of Fortes, *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*, cap. iii, and *The Dynamics of Clanship*, pp. 195–6 note and p. 198.

[3] For further details see Paul Mboya, 'Luo Kitgi gi Timbegi' (*East African Standard*, Nairobi), an English translation of which is to be published under the auspices of the East Africa Literature Bureau. See also Evans-Pritchard, 'Marriage Customs of the Luo of Kenya', *Africa*, vol. xx, 1950, p. 132.

[4] A Luo maximal lineage, as the most inclusive agnatic descent group based on an accepted and putatively continuous genealogy, may coincide with 'clan', or it may be a segment within it where clan refers to a group united by a sentiment of common descent without this explicit genealogical basis.

19:Wilson E-5 (ca. 1950) 1960
FL11 Luo FL11

762 the village, she would be teased and chided pleasantly about
159 the fact that he was her future husband. Perhaps she would
584 have been married sooner, had her future husband, Opala, not been employed in a city many hundreds of miles away. He returned on his long leave to consummate the marriage at the time when the girl had just finished her secondary education and was about 18 years of age.

While at school, however, Akech had fallen in love with a teacher, Okare, in a neighboring technical school and he was determined to marry her. He went to her father and pleaded to be allowed to repay the bride-wealth animals her father had received years before and to complete the bride-wealth payments to marry the girl by Luo law and custom. Opio adamantly refused, and her brothers threatened Okare with physical violence if he should try to see the girl again. Okare was heartbroken and returned to his place of employment. Akech, however, had other ideas. When she was told that the date of her wedding had been fixed, she pleaded and tried every traditional way of breaking the marriage, but was unsuccessful. Her father and her prospective husband remained adamant.[1]

159 The night before the wedding, she ran away from home to
762 join Okare at his place of employment. Both knew that they
584 would be pursued by the girl's brothers and by her father, so
684 they hired a car and fled to the boy's village in a distant Luo tribe, some 200 miles away. Her father, brothers and future husband pursued the lovers to Okare's village where the father had him arrested for taking Akech from his custody. Okare's brothers, however, took the girl to Nairobi to hide her pending the result of the case. One of the brothers was then arrested for aiding and abetting the elopement.

Now the essence of this case goes to show that the father

[842]

[1] By tradition, a girl may run off to the home of a "bride" [illegible] to marry will produce sterility. She may climb a tree *bondo*, an *euphorbia*, which is believed to be closely associated with the ancestors. There are several other ways, all of which would cancel an ordinary wedding, but none is effective in the case of *nyar kiseke*.

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

this attitude that unmarried girls, as they grow older, are often forced to marry in the end by taking advantage of the institution of polygamy, which acts as a final method of absorption. Although she may live to an advanced age, a single girl is continually tormented by the fact that society does not approve of unmarried girls.

Restrictions. Traditionally, a mature girl is not allowed to enter her father's or her mother's sleeping place, especially if the mother is still giving birth to children. This restriction, although generally ignored by Christians, applies also to the wives of her uncles. Those who are her parents or parents by marriage do not go where a girl receives her male visitors. By custom this hut was built beyond view of the parents' huts and served as a sleeping place for boys. It is considered that a girl who has commenced associating with men should not enter her mother's or father's hut because she would interfere with their powers of reproduction.

Relationship with brothers. The fear of incest has led to the practice of keeping young women's activities as separate as possible from those of their brothers, but free association and conversation concerning their mutual interests generally takes place, since brothers and sisters retain an interest in each others' love affairs. From his sisters, a young man may be informed of things he wishes to know about his girl friend.

Pre-marital pregnancy. Cases of pre-marital pregnancy were very rare in the past, according to most of my informants. But this rarity was not due to the fact that sexual relationships were prohibited. Pregnancy among mature girls was apparently not infrequent from any strict moral code, but from the conscious effort of the girls themselves to guard against it. Because much importance was attached to virginity, it was a matter of personal pride and was carefully guarded. It was a great honour and a

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

Childless marriages. Failure to have a child is a great disaster in the home. The idea of the perpetuation of their kind is so deeply rooted in the minds of the Luo people that a childless marriage generally culminates in the breaking up of the home concerned, the husband usually being advised by his relatives to marry a second wife. Although results may prove that it is the husband who is defective, priority is always given to men to prove their fecundity. Thus a woman is forbidden by the social conventions to attempt to prove on her own initiative that she can give birth to children. 842 [586]

If through the second marriage the husband is proved to be sterile, his wives may one by one desert him. On the other hand, this great desire for children may lead him to carry on his name through the secret offices of the woman's brothers-in-law. Otherwise he must face the inevitable fate of having his family broken up. [586]

Women's diet after birth. For the first week after childbirth, the mother's food is limited to gruel, fish, and green vegetables. 'Bo', which is one of the vegetable pulses, is excluded on account of the trouble it gives to the stomach. During this early period meat is not eaten because most women complain that it makes the stomach tight. Hard food, such as boiled maize, is also avoided at this time. Although tea and coffee are occasionally drunk by the more fortunate families, the drink which pleases women most at this time is gruel. They are allowed to take a lot of it as people believe that it helps in the formation of the milk which is so important for feeding the new baby. 846 262 [272] [853]

The period of this considered treatment is brief, lasting for about a month at the most. Much depends on the economic resources of the family concerned, and the poorer the family is, the shorter is the time that careful attention can be given.

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

512 462 264 [853] [356] *Daily rhythm of family duties.* The daily programme of a mother with a young child is divided into two major phases, corresponding with the morning and the evening meals. In the morning the activities include the preparation of gruel for the child, preceded by suckling it and sweeping the house. When prepared, the gruel is left with a nurse, to be given to the child when it cries. The mother then goes to the field or to any major work of the day. Preparation of the morning meal begins at about 9 a.m., and by 10 a.m. the family disperses again, the men perhaps to herd cattle or to go to market, and the women to fetch firewood or bring water from the river.

[178] The idea of having a meal freshly prepared in the morning is of recent origin. In the past, people ate cold food preserved from the previous evening meal. A great proportion of what is eaten during the week comes from the gardens.

[178] In former days, women were expected to prepare an afternoon gruel for their husbands at about 3 p.m. This is still the custom in some families, but modern women are quite ignorant of the practice in its traditional form.

858 613 *The social attitude towards male and female children.* The difference in the social attitude towards male and female children arises from considering them in relation to the future of the lineage to which they belong. A male child is looked upon as a dynamic element in the lineal structure. On the other hand, a female child, though a potential source of wealth, is regarded as an exporter of fertility from her parents' lineage to the lineage of her husband. Thus, if she becomes the mother [842] [593] of many children, her larger numbers are looked upon with disfavour as taking something away from her original family. This results in a superstitious feeling which affects her visits to the parental home.

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

Although a larger number of males would normally be preferred, a family of exclusively male children is regarded as a disadvantage because of the economic burden incurred when the sons want to marry. But when a father has only female children, his position is considered as 'dead', for a family is only considered as living when there are male members to perpetuate the line.

858
842

The Social Environment

Lineage. Social relationship among the Luo is determined by the strict manner in which their society is organized. Since the social structure follows a system of lineage (*dhoudi*, pl., *dhoot*, sing.), the exogamous limits or the limits within which intermarriage may not take place, depend on the relationship between these lineages. When relationships are close, the lineages unite through their dead originators until a common ancestor is reached. The lineages continue to grow, thus stretching the distance of relationship further and further. The breaking of the rule against intermarriage depends on the attitude of the living members of the lineages and the distance between them and their ancestors.

613
582

In addition to the regulation of matrimonial relationships, the structure of the society also determines ritual observances and funeral ceremonies among the Luo, while the relationship between the different lineages is characterized by competition, which is often a feature of polygamous homes.

613
595

Family relationships. The difference between monogamous and polygamous homes is found not only in the status of the women, but also in the psychological attitude towards the parents resulting from the husband and wife relationship. Although it is generally assumed that the focus of family life is the father, the degree of

595
594